

Ensuring a strong framework for the Office of the Independent Monitor

2021 Proposed Charter Changes

Since 2004, Denver has had independent, civilian oversight of the Police and Sheriff Departments. An Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) monitors internal investigations, provides input on discipline, and recommends policies and procedures. A Citizen Oversight Board (COB) evaluates the OIM, makes policy-level recommendations regarding discipline and use of force, and communicates regularly with the community and safety agencies.

The Independent Monitor is currently appointed by the Mayor and functions under the Executive Branch alongside all other City agencies, including the ones they are charged with monitoring. Additionally, the Office of the Independent Monitor is advised on legal matters by a city attorney's office that also represents the very safety agencies over whom the OIM exercises oversight. Conversations with the COB, the former Monitor, and advocacy from community have all raised concerns about how independent the Monitor's office really is, and whether the current structure of it allows the office to effectively act as an oversight body.

Councilmembers Torres, Gilmore, and Kniech collaborated with members of the COB on the following charter changes to increase the independence of the OIM. In August of 2021, Council also passed a companion ordinance to expand the size, representation and transparency of the committee charged with searching for a new monitor in the case of future vacancies - these changes will only go into effect if the charter amendment is passed by Denver voters in November 2021.

- 1 Monitor appointment authority:** Give the Citizen Oversight Board (COB) the authority to appoint the Monitor, and any interim Monitor, with confirmation by City Council.
- 2 Outside Counsel:** Give the Monitor the authority to hire an attorney from outside the City Attorney's Office to provide independent legal advice to the OIM.
- 3 OIM staff:** Move the staff of the Office of the Independent Monitor to Career Service classification and allow the Monitor up to two (2) appointees within the office in any role.

